

## BEYOND the DESERT

By Curran  
Richard Greenley

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Nadula clinched the shuttle tightly in her brown fingers and wove the scarlet thread in and out, scarce seeing for the angry tears that rained from under the black curtain of her lashes. Wahna, always Wahna! Truly, there was never a thought of her but the weaving of blankets and the baking of the tortilla.

A jingle of beads and the patter of moccasined feet, as Wahna parted the skins that hung at the door of the chief's tent. Well might they call her Princess Wahna, the "Moon Maiden"—tall and slight, with a mouth like the pomegranate flower and a voice like the far-off chime of the mission bells.

Nadula lifted her head and shot a contemptuous glance over the girl's slight figure, gay with wampum, elk teeth and the glistening beads from the white traders, with which Neras loved to decorate his best loved child. "Idle, always idle," she muttered to herself. But she smiled and called out cheerily as Wahna came toward her. "Hail, daughter of the great chief! How does our father since the morning?"

Wahna's delicate face was grave and sorrowful. "The medicine man hath been with him, and the evil spirits will not depart, though they have made the white smoke of the fire anger to rise until our father could bear it no longer. He is feeble, and the breath comes slowly. He calls for thee."

Nadula arose to her full height and let the unfinished blanket fall to the ground, where it lay, a gleam of gorgeous color in the setting sun. Inside the hut of skins lay the chief, ghastly in the shifting shadows of the eagle plumes in the great war bonnet that hung above his head. The massive figure stretched helplessly upon its couch of buffalo skins was pitifully wasted with disease. He reached out his arms to Wahna and, holding her encircled, said to Nadula, who stood proudly aloof in the uncertain light:

"Daughter, it is not our custom to show aught of feeling. As the quiet river runneth deeply, so we of the Ottawas have kept our love and our vengeance. But thou knowest what the Moon Maiden hath been to me, child of the paleface mother, and it hath seemed wise that the maid should know a gentler life than the women of the Ottawas. Thou knowest how she has been taught in their schools and is promised to the young captain?"

Nadula laughed. Short and bitter, it roused the dying man, and he raised upon one elbow to peer into her face. Nadula bent over him. "My father, as the shadows gather thou art a child again! The white man hath sought our Wahna for a moon perhaps, but when there is talk of wedding he will return to his own again. When has the paleface dealt otherwise with the daughters of the forest?" The mocking voice paused for the answer. Something of his strength came back to the old chief as he half raised himself and pointed to the doorway. "Go, serpent. The black finger is upon thy heart. Go, and when I ride down the west remember I leave Wahna in thy keeping and do thou see the right of it, else thou knowest what has been, what will be, when thy tribe shall hold the traitor."

There was a gasp and a choking sigh, and Neras, the last chief of a once powerful tribe, had passed. All night the wailing women rent the air with their cries, all night the men went to and fro, with angry slashes of the slinky breasts whence the blood fell in slow drops. At set of the morrow's sun they buried him, shrouded in his blanket, the eagle feathers waving over the dark face and at his feet the slaughtered pony that was to bear him safe and far.

No more of weaving, no more of baking the tortilla. Nadula grasped the empty scepter. Day after day Wahna crept to the door of the tent and shaded her level brows in vain watching for her lover. Had Nadula spoken truly?

For a time Nadula was too busy with the importance of her new authority to take thought of Wahna, but she had not forgotten. In the long summer days of the year before, when the young captain had chance to visit the Ottawas through mere curiosity and the visit had been repeated again and again for the sake of the brown flower of the wilderness, Nadula, too, had learned to love the bonny face. And in her hot, unschooled heart sprang up the terrible hatred of Wahna.

It had commenced years before when Neras had sent Wahna away from the tribe, and from time to time she had made them short visits from her mission school with always a newer grace, a newer beauty, and the spirit of the white mother shining in her soft eyes. Neras had loved her with the aftermath of the great passion he had felt for the white captive that had hated him, who died with her despairing face turned away from the child of her sorrow and shame.

Nadula had understood. She had not wanted for the telling when the women crooned together over the cooking pots at evening. What wonder that she hated Wahna with all the force of a savage nature.

In the midst of the full came an awakening, for despite all Nadula's mission training, Malcolm Davenport crossed the desert to claim his bride. Nadula received him in the council tent, with the head men grouped around her. It was her hand that held out the pipe and bade him sit beside her, contriving to hold him there with one pretext and another. Davenport

tened absently as the sullen sweet voice murmured to him. Then, ere she could detain him, he broke away, and, springing to the center of the tent, called upon the Ottawas for the pledge of Neras—Wahna. By the spoken word of Neras in solemn council had the girl been given to him; and as Nadula would have interfered, one by one the elders of the tribe arose to bear witness to the bond.

Then Wahna, her face alight with joy, came from the shadows where she had hidden in her despair. There was no gainsaying the word that had passed. Nadula watched, her heart almost stifled, as the men and women parted to either side. The old medicine man drew his circle around the two, while the red flame from the fire leaped and threw its golden light on the faces of Malcolm Davenport and Wahna.

That night the Ottawas feasted, and there was great rejoicing, for at the rising of the moon the Princess Wahna would ride away from them forever. And when the feast was ended Nadula brought forth a bottle of musty hued wine to pledge them "after the manner of the paleface," as she said, and smiled into Davenport's eyes. She was quick as thought, but the eye of love is swifter. Wahna sprang from Davenport's side and grasped the slender wrist. "Poison! Poison!" And a low murmur of horror ran around the great tent.

Nadula drew her slender form to its full height and glanced proudly from one face to another. "What say ye, my people? Am I guilty?" The defiance rang clear as a clarion note, and no man answered. Again: "What say ye, my people? Judge ye between us—the white serpent or the true daughter of the Ottawas?" The wind in the mesquite was the only answer. Wahna still clasped the slender wrist in her tense fingers, while the glare of the torches threw red waves of light on the swart faces as the ring drew ever closer.

The old medicine man parted the crowd to either side. "Daughters of the great Chief Neras, hail!" And the elk teeth rattled on his shrunken chest as he knelt, spreading out his clawlike hands. "Hearken to the voice of one old in council. Hear, accuser and accused. If there be poison in the cup, as the Lady Wahna hath said, then let the Lady Nadula drink that which she hath prepared for another, but if there be no poison then shall she drink to prove the blackness of a lie. I have spoken."

A shudder ran along the surge of faces that gathered around Nadula. Wahna's hand fell away, and she covered against Davenport's shoulder.

Nadula's proud eyes swept the mass before her, hostile and grim. There was not an answering eye. "Drink, Nadula!" the old voice commanded, and Nadula drained the wine. Then she gathered her robes around her and went out from among them.

Miles away to the westward rode Davenport, with Wahna close at his side, the sturdy cayuse keeping uneven stride with the Kentucky thoroughbred, on to where the white tower of the mission shone above the olive groves, out to the west, to her mother's people. But beyond the fringe of the desert, in the land of the Ottawas, there are shrouded faces among the older men, and the ponies are laden for a long march away to the south. In the hut of Neras lay something that they might not touch under the law of the Ottawas, alone, accused, the unseeing eyes peering through the shadows of the tent into the deeper shadows beyond.

**Reed and Ingalls.**  
"Why don't you grow?" said Tom Reed to Senator Ingalls some years ago, when both men were in the service of the people at Washington.

"Ah," said Ingalls, who was of very slight stature, "I'm too much interested in my fellows' life and property to assume to your magnificent height and proportion."

"And is not that my concern, too?" asked Reed deliberately.

"Impossible!" said Ingalls. "Walk on the edge of a board walk and you lift up the other end; stand in the middle and you break through. The people's safety lies in your being a middle of the road man."

Some days after Reed found Ingalls in a state of mental distraction. "Just swallowed the gold fillings of this front tooth," explained Senator Ingalls, pointing to the exposed cavity.

Reed laughed immoderately. He drew himself up to his full height. As a victor he stood; his time of revenge had come.

"Ingalls, I congratulate you. You are now worth your weight in gold."

**The Age of Trees.**  
"Penn's treaty tree—the treaty elm—does that still exist?" a young man asked the antiquary. "No," said the old man; "it was blown down on the night of March 3, 1810. This tree, as its concentric circles showed, was 283 years old; no great age that for a tree. There is in England, at Cowthorpe, an oak that is supposed to be 800 years old. The English yews of ten reach an almost incredible age. The celebrated Antwerp yew is 1,400 years old, and there are others of an equal age. Some of our American pines can hold their own in respect of age with the European trees. Oregon pines on being cut down have shown as many as 1,100 concentric rings running from the heart out to the bark. Do you know who first showed us how to tell a tree's age by its rings? It was Montaigne, the essayist."—Philadelphia Record.

**Why Don't You Seek Some Employment Instead of Stepping People and Asking Them for Money?**  
"What?" said Meandering Mike reproachfully, "dat's no employment."—Washington Star.

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## GRAVE DECATUR.

The Story of His Pierce Attack on a Tripolitan Vessel.

Gardner W. Allen in his book, "Our Navy and the Barbary Corsairs," retells the old story of how Commodore Stephen Decatur, then a lieutenant in the United States navy, attacked a Tripolitan vessel. The incident occurred in 1804, when Preble was lying off Tripoli. Young Decatur had been told that the captain of this vessel had treacherously murdered his brother, John Decatur, after he had surrendered to him. Mr. Allen writes: "He ran alongside and at once boarded with Macedonough and the remnant of his crew. Decatur singled out the captain, a man of great size and strength, and attacked him furiously. The Tripolitan made a thrust with his boarding pike, and in attempting to parry the blow Decatur's cutlass was broken off at the hilt, leaving him for the moment unarmed. Another thrust of the pike wounded him in the arm. Decatur seized the weapon, wrenched it away and grappled with his antagonist. After a short struggle they fell to the deck, with Decatur on top.

"Meanwhile the two crews were fighting furiously about their leaders, and a Tripolitan aimed a blow at Decatur's head with his scimitar, when a seaman named Daniel Frazier, having both arms disabled by wounds, interposed his head and received the blow, which laid open the scalp. The Tripolitan captain, being more powerful than Decatur, soon turned him underneath and, holding him down with his left hand, drew a knife and was about to plunge it into his breast.

"Decatur seized the uplifted arm with his left hand, while he managed to get his right into his pocket, where he had a pistol. Giving it the proper direction, he fired through the pocket. The giant relaxed his hold and fell dead. Having lost seventeen killed, including their leader, the seven surviving Tripolitans, four of whom were wounded, soon gave up the fight."

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## DID YOU EVER WONDER—

Why a baby carriage isn't known as a cryccyle?

Why it is so much easier to be wrong than it is to be president?

Why some people manage to talk a great deal without saying anything?

Why so many of our coming men seem to be handicapped from the start?

Why the company that issues the map has the only curveless railroad thereon?

Why the average man invariably makes a fool of himself every time he tries to act up?

Why men are nearly always embarrassed when they propose—either financially or otherwise?

Why so many men who are anxious to work when sick are just as anxious to avoid it when well?

Why some men are not as black as they are painted and some are not as white as they are whitewashed?—Cincinnati Enquirer.

## Plain Clothes Men.

In a small South American state which had recently undergone a change of administration the new potentate summoned an artist and ordered new designs for all the official uniforms.

"I wish showy costumes—very showy," he said, "for the people are impressed by them. I have here some sketches that I myself have made. Look them over and be guided by these ideas as far as possible."

The artist examined the sketches carefully.

"This," he said, turning the pages, "is evidently for the navy and this for the army, but if you please, what is this—a long plume on a three cornered hat, yellow dress coat trimmed with purple, and—"

"That," replied the chief of state gravely, "is for the secret police."

## Be Kind Today.

Less spent on the dead and more spent on the living would bring about many happy results. Hearts are breaking, loved ones wait and tears flow all because of the withholding of kind

words unspoken and letters never sent. The aged father and mother far off in the country would often be cheered did the son or daughter more frequently send them a letter. Behold the sad mistakes of others, their remorse, and profit by the same before it is too late.

Today, now, speak the loving word, send the tender message, write the letter you put off day by day, and don't wait until you forget it or until bitter memories haunt you.

## A Brazilian Household Pet.

Brasilians train a snake called the ghibo as a rat catcher. It is fifteen feet long, is harmless to the human being, becomes quite a household pet, is lazy in the daytime, but at night roams about the house in quest of its prey—rats. These animals it promptly kills by twisting their necks. When Brasilians have to pass from room to room in the dark they first put on their slippers. It would not be pleasant to plant one's bare feet on a cold stony snake of that size.

## Weak Human Nature.

From many selections from Marcus Aurelius we choose this as showing his keen insight into this weak human nature of ours: "I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men, but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others."

## What a Luxury.

"But," objected the heiress, "I have been accustomed to every luxury."

"That's all the more reason why you should marry me," replied the impecunious suitor. "I'm a luxury myself."—Pittsburgh Courier.

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